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ABSTRACT

"The Later Middle Ages: Civilization Reborn" in Ginn's "Our World," a chapter from a sixth grade social studies textbook, was assessed by the author, who used specific evaluation criteria. Although four strengths were indicated, the author dealt primarily with weaknesses of the text and made many suggestions for improvement. Some of the author's criticisms were that (1) vocabulary was not consistent, i.e., some words were defined, others were not; (2) the grammatical construction of sentences was poor; (3) topic sentences were unclear and paragraphs sometimes contained several topics; and (4) headings, transitions, and connecting words were not used in paragraphs. In addition, students reading this chapter would be required to infer many ideas and to recall information from previous chapters. It was recommended that more summaries and explicit labeling of topics be used, as well as more examples. Overall, to improve the chapter, the author suggests that it be completely rewritten by a single author with a less authoritarian style, keeping the sixth grade reader in mind. Appended are the original version and the author's improved version of the chapter. (BY)

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Suggestions for Improving a Poorly Written Sixth Grade Social Studies Chapter

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Center for the Study of Reading

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An Analysis and Evaluation of 'The Later Middle Ages: Civilization Reborn' with Some Suggested Improvements

Introduction

Recently some educational psychologists have begun exploring student learning problems within a tetrahedral framework (Brown, et al., 1981). In this framework there are four factors that comprise the learner-in-a-learning-situation: (1) the learner's activity, (2) the characteristics of the learner, (3) the criterial task, and (4) the nature of the materials to be learned. The learner's activity might consist of strategies, rules and macrorules, procedures, and monitoring as applied to comprehending, for instance. The learner's characteristics might consist of memory limitations, intelligence, ability to activate available knowledge or to reason by analogy. Criterial tasks are exemplified by tasks such as gist versus verbatim recall, generalized rule use, resolving ambiguities, or following instructions. The nature of the materials is the fourth factor and consists of text features such as structure, coherence, logical content, or the author's explicit meaning cues. It is this last factor that I am concerned with in this analysis and evaluation of Chapter six--The Later Middle Ages: Civilization Reborn, found in Ginn's Our World sixth grade social studies textbook.

The text format in this chapter is expository. The structure of exposition revolves around actions (if it is historical exposition) or around more or less abstract generalizations (explicit or implicit) and elaborations of some sort on those generalizations. The relationships among the

generalizations, between the generalization and supporting elaborations, or among the elaborations are often described as superordinate and subordinate, problem and solution, cause and effect, topic and description, order of importance, chronological order, and so forth (Meyer, 1975, 1977).

Ideally, there are three goals for social studies textbooks as far as learner outcomes are concerned. One goal is presenting subject matter on an appropriate level of complexity so it is learnable. Another goal is promoting learning to learn activities so that there is an increase in students' self-control and self-awareness of their own learning processes in addition to performance per se. A third goal is enhancing students' ability to understand the significance of the material they are learning rather than just improving their ability to recall it. To achieve the goals, all four factors of the tetrahedral model must interact together: text characteristics, learner characteristics, learner activities, and criterial task.

A social studies textbook can promote several levels of learning outcomes. The highest level would produce an independent reader who is textbook dependent, a very active reader. There is no direct teaching on this level and self-control of strategies and understanding the significance is assumed. The middle level would produce a partially textbook dependent, partially teacher dependent reader who is somewhat active. This reader can use strategies and learn the significance of strategies and content. The lowest level would produce a teacher dependent but nontextbook dependent reader who is not active. This reader has no strategies for learning to learn or accessing memory (T. Anderson,

1982). My evaluation of this chapter assumes the learning outcome goal is to produce a textbook dependent, independent reader on the highest level (or possibly a partially textbook dependent--partially teacher dependent reader on the middle level). A social studies textbook that would achieve those goals must be reader-based rather than writer-based. To be reader-based, it must have these characteristics: appropriate vocabulary; appropriate grammatical complexity; thematization/coherence; appropriate structure/organization; appropriate elaboration; explicit meaning cues; style; and appropriate logical content complexity. These are the selected text characteristics that will be analyzed and critiqued, the ones that seem to significantly affect students' understanding and remembering from text, based on research.

Analysis and Critique of Text Characteristics

Strengths

There are four strengths that can be mentioned. First, the chapter begins with a thematic vignette as an introduction. An introduction that is narrative in nature serves to capture the readers' attention and involve them immediately in the text (Corbett, 1977). The themes focused on in the narrative are somehow all dealt with one way or another in the chapter. The narrative has many problems, but it would serve as an attention-getting and perhaps motivational device. Second, there is a short, selected review of the early Middle Ages from chapter five that would serve as a reminder and as a contrast for the later Middle Ages in this chapter. Third, there is a very brief preview of the topics for the next chapter

at the end of chapter six. Finally, there is an attempt to involve the readers in the text and build solidarity with the use of imperative sentences (Look at the map . . .) and first person plural (In the next chapter we shall read about . . .).

Weaknesses

Even though there are a few strengths, there are many, many weaknesses in the chapter. The remainder of this section will deal with the selected eight text characteristics that help form the nature of the social studies text material in chapter six.

Vocabulary: One of the most important text characteristics for comprehending and remembering is vocabulary (Anderson & Freebody, 1981). Readability formulas are based on vocabulary familiarity, word length, and sentence length, recognizing the importance of these three variables for learning (Fry, 1980). Johnston (in press) has found that knowledge of specific social studies vocabulary is a potent factor in reading comprehension and in test bias. Knowing specific and general vocabulary words indicates prior knowledge of the content, and prior knowledge affects learning. Chapter six defines 13 vocabulary words and concepts that qualify as specific vocabulary needed for the later Middle Ages: apprentice, journeyman, charter, trade routes, craft, guild, flying-buttresses, Gothic, Mongols, Renaissance, universities, modern age and moveable type. These are defined in the text itself (not well-defined, however). Yet many specific vocabulary words are not defined: Romance languages, Eastern Roman Empire, Christine de Pisan, Johann Gutenberg, languages, serfdom,

freedom, Germanic languages, crossroads, manuscript, chapel, sculptor, exploration, master, block printing, trade, the arts, artisans, merchants, saints, portraits, fleets, cathedrals, lectures, scholar, fertile, nomads and others.

Seventy words or phrases that are potential problems were identified and classified. 1) suffix problems such as serfdom, Germanic; 2) compounds such as crossroads; 3) archaic language such as "I am that" and clothe; 4) figurative language such as secrets of the weaver's arts, shuttles flew to and fro; 5) verbs and participles such as arched, migrated; 6) elegant variation (equivalence terms such as stored up = remembered and lords = nobles = the rich; 7) adjectives, nouns, and noun phrases such as fertile, artisans and printing press; 8) polysemous words such as work (in metal), master (weaver), native (language), duties, mark, shop, etc. Mason, et al. (1979) found that children often do not know the secondary, technical meanings of polysemous words and that reading comprehension is affected. Fowler (1966) and Selzer (1981) point out the problems readers have when writers use synonyms for the same concept. Often readers believe several different concepts are being discussed. Based on some recent pilot work with sixth graders reading this chapter, children also have problems with derivations. They do not, for instance, associate artisan with artist or art. Vocabulary then is the first text characteristic weakness important for learning that must be corrected.

Grammatical Complexity. Another important text characteristic is grammatical complexity, one that readability formulas do not consider. Learnability is affected by unusual placement of phrases, certain

constructions, nominalizations, some passives, and lack of agency. The results of a study by Charrow (1980) indicated grammatical complexity is at the root of jurists' difficulties with legalese. No doubt some of sixth graders' difficulties with social studies textbookese is due to grammatical complexity. The last paragraph on page 117 of the chapter concerns guilds helping democracy grow. The text has these two sentences: (1) Keeping women out of guilds did not help the growth of democracy. (2) Yet making fair rules would some day include women. Sentence one has a complex noun phrase as a subject--a verbal phrase that is a complex grammatical construction. In addition, the sentence has a negative, adding further processing problems for young readers. Sentence two seems to be written with the intention of being parallel in structure to sentence one. It also has a verbal phrase for the subject of the sentence. The sentence, however, does not make sense. Making fair rules cannot sensibly be used as a subject for the sentence verb would include because of semantic constraints. Perhaps there is a typesetting error or perhaps it is an example of poor writing. The sentence initial logical connector yet together with the negative not in the previous sentence adds another processing problem as readers try to see the relationships between the propositions in these two sentences. Rewriting the sentences to make them grammatically simpler would add to the sentence length: The decision of the guilds to keep women from joining kept democracy from growing as fast as it could have. Yet some day guilds would include women among the members who made fair rules. Other grammatically complex examples besides these can be found in chapter six that should be rewritten even though sentences become longer.

Thematization/coherence: Long ago Aristotle said that the essentials for a speech were: the point to be made and the support for the point. Other elements (introduction, conclusion and preview) could be added if desired. Textbook chapters are speech events and they, too, need a single point that is well supported in order to be considered well-written. A text that has one controlling idea or thesis has global unity, continuity and coherence. The same facts are true on the paragraph level when topic sentences are used to perform the same function as the thesis statement. Several research studies support the notion that a thematic statement--either a thesis or topic sentence--facilitates learning. Kieras (1979) found that whether a passage is organized around a single major referent or not has a powerful effect on the difficulty of identifying the topic which is then used to construct a macrostructure for the statement of the topic. When the topics are not transparent, readers engage in time-consuming inferential processes to construct a suitable macrostructure for the passage. In a second study (1980) he found that subjects abstract main ideas more easily when the material is familiar. A third study (1978) showed that conventional expository paragraph structure with topic sentences presented first led to faster processing and better recall. Braddock (197) claims that writing is clearer and more comfortable to read when paragraphs present explicit topic sentences.

Chapter six, 'The Later Middle Ages: Civilization Reborn,' does not have an explicit or implicit global thematic idea so unity and coherence suffer as a result of this lack. The chapter title indicates the topic is the later Middle Ages, and the chapter does indeed concern this topic. The

predication or point to be made about the topic is lacking, however--the essential element for a well-formed speech event. The title indicates the predication might be that civilization was reborn (the Renaissance) in the later Middle Ages. Yet only one section of the chapter concerns the Renaissance: The 'rebirth' of art and learning. The other sections are concerned with change, crusades, trade, towns, growing freedom, schools, learning about Asia, and the end of the Middle Ages. There is no single topic but multiple topics. The multiple topics result in abrupt topic shifts and discontinuities for the readers. To make matters worse, the title for Unit two is Europe: freedom grows slowly, suggesting that the overall thesis is that freedom was growing slowly in Europe. Here the topic is freedom. The title for chapter six does not relate at all to the topic of freedom and only one subheading uses freedom in the title: Trade, towns, and growing freedom. There seems to be no connection between the unit and chapter topics and predications about topics. Students reading titles and the following text would see discrete, unconnected sections making up the chapter.

Chapter paragraphs usually do not have topic sentences. An example is on page 116. The paragraph begins: Merchants settled in these towns to carry on their trade. It continues with four sentences about artisans also settling in towns and ends: Some of the merchants and some of the artisans grew rich. The paragraph discusses two types of free people--the merchants and artisans--the beginning of the middle class which is an important notion for the growth of freedom concept. A topic sentence such as These towns were settled by two types of free people, the merchants and

artisans is needed. Somewhere in the paragraph merchants and artisans should be defined. An additional paragraph should then discuss the significance of merchants and artisans for a middle class citizenry and democracy.

Topic shifts on the paragraph level, usually caused by shortening sentences to fit readability formulas, can be seen in the paragraph about guilds, page 117. The paragraph begins with guild members learning to make fair rules, continues with learning to implement fair rules, jumps to keeping women out of guilds as a factor in the growth of democracy, then jumps to making fair rules some day including women, and finally to learning to make laws for a democracy. Schallert and Tierney (1982) discuss the negative effects of topic shift and discontinuity on learning from expository texts. Topic shifts and lack of thematization weaken the chapter.

Structure/organization: Several studies looking at the effects of organizational structure on retention for oral communication have found that subjects who listen to well-structured speeches remember more than those who listen to poorly structured speeches (Thompson, 1960; Spicer & Bassett, 1976). Chapter six is a poorly structured speech event. The opening narrative illustrates guilds and women artisans who are prevented from joining guilds. After the narrative, the chapter immediately gives a review of the early Middle Ages, focusing on the lack of education and freedom. It then moves to the crusades and new ideas that crusaders brought back from Asia as a cause of change. Next it continues with trade as another cause of change, but disgresses to the history of trade between Europe and Asia and the inland/sea process for getting goods from Asia to Europe. It mentions a few reasons why Europeans wanted Asian goods and then

discusses towns that developed at crossroads and the growth of free towns and guilds.

It seems strange that guilds are not brought up until the very end of the section since the reader expects to read about guilds in the expository text immediately after the illustrative case study of Hilda the Weaver. It is not normal for concepts to be separated from illustrations by four whole pages. The digression into the history and process of trade also seems to interrupt the idea of trade causing change in the later Middle Ages. The poor structure of the chapter is bound to interfere with students' learning. The underlying structure of chapter six does not have a conventional, cannonical structure as do stories and argumentative essays. Instead, it is a mixture of narrative and generalizations but with no clear point for the narrative to illustrate. It seems more like the structure of a popular magazine article in its unclear, erratic structure.

Explicit meaning cues: This important text characteristic includes such things as headings, subsections, logical connectors, transitions, explicitly labeled main ideas and purposes, and summaries. Meyer, et al. (1978) showed that explicit signaling of connectives facilitated recall among poor ninth-grade comprehenders but not among skilled ones. In contrast, Johnson (1980) found that texts that deleted conjunctions decreased recall by skilled readers. Britton, et al. (1982) demonstrated that texts containing signals about idea importance and idea relations required less cognitive capacity to process than texts without signals. Davison (1982) discussed the difficulty for inexperienced readers with

little prior knowledge in making the right inferences for sentences without explicit connectors used in content-area textbooks. Kieras (1980) reported that explicitly labeling topics and main ideas led to better processing of technical passages. The positive effects of summaries on the recall of information from prose was reported by Hartley and Trueman (1982).

Explicit meaning cues do not appear often in chapter six. The chapter does have titles, but they are frequently misleading cues. One title is New ideas come to Europe. Readers expect the author to tell them not only that ideas came to Europe but also what the new ideas were. This does not happen. Instead, readers are told about some new products that came to Europe. Another title is Building changes; coming of schools. The title is a strange one--ambiguous and hard to comprehend. Building changes can be read two ways: Building changes or Building changes. Either one would make sense based on the text material presented up to this point. Most students in sixth grade have not been taught about semicolon as a punctuation mark, so would not know how to read the title. The second half of the title, coming of schools, is, no doubt, supposed to be parallel in structure to the first half, since both words end in -ing but in fact they are not, since Building is either an adjective or a verb and coming is a noun followed by a prepositional phrase. There seems to be no connection between the two title parts, and reading the text shows that to be the case: there is no connection. Why the two sections were combined and the two-part title used is unclear unless the beginning of schools and universities is considered another type of change. If so, it and all the other changes (most of them implicit) should be made explicit.

The bold faced sentences in the chapter are probably an attempt to explicitly cue meaning, but they are confusing. They serve a dual purpose--as section subheadings in sentence form and as the first sentence of the text itself. The sentences are on a higher level of generality than the following sentences in the paragraph in which they appear and do not seem closely related to the sentence that immediately follows. An example of this is found on page 115: Trade between Europe and Asia began to increase. This would seem to be a topic sentence for the paragraph that follows. The topic is trade between Europe and Asia and the predication made about it is that it began to increase. Readers would expect what follows to support the notion that trade increased. Nowhere is any discussion of the increase given, and the word increase does not appear at all. However, the last two words of the section are a synonym phrase grew rapidly. What is between the bold faced initial sentence and the last two words of the five paragraph subsection is the process explanation of how goods were brought from Asia to Europe over land and over water routes. The last two sentences state: After the crusades began, Europeans learned more about the products of Asia. Trade between Europe and Asia grew rapidly--a reassertion of the bold-faced initial sentence and a misleading cue for the following text material.

The chapter would be improved by removing bold-faced sentences and replacing them with more informative sentence titles and headings separate from the text and by providing each logical paragraph with its own real topic sentence. The paragraphing is done for reasons other than logic. The short three or four sentence paragraphs are reminiscent of journalistic

paragraphing used for aesthetic reasons and for "easier" reading by unskilled readers.

Many of the relationships between sentences as well as main ideas are difficult to determine in chapter six because few logical connectors are used. The beginning of the expository part immediately following the Hilda narrative is like this: (1) The early part of the Middle Ages was coming to an end. (2) Travelers were bringing new ideas back to Europe. Sentence one is the effect and sentence two is the cause, yet readers must infer the causal relationship because no explicit because connector was used. The two sentences appear together with the connector could be considered the topic sentence for the section, but students would never realize it. The section continues by developing the notion that one kind of traveler who brought back new ideas, causing the early Middle Ages to change, was the crusader and another kind of traveler was the trader who went to Asia. Another case of omitted connectors is found on page 116: Rich people in the feudal lands of Europe were eager to get the trade goods. (because) The Europeans had no refrigeration. (so) Often their meat was strong-tasting or half spoiled. (and) Spices made it taste better. (In addition) Their clothing was of leather and rough woolen cloth. (Therefore) They were eager for clothes made of fine cotton and silk. Clearly, the inference load imposed on readers because of the lack of explicit connectors would affect their understanding and remembering.

The chapter would be improved by adding not only logical connectors but summaries as well. The chapter has no explicit summary or preview at the beginning or at the end on the global level and no summary statements that look back or ahead on the local level within the chapter. Summaries are

useful as structural pegs for readers, helping them to better predict what will follow and integrate the content into pre-existing knowledge structures. Studies by Hartley and Trueman (1982) and discussion by Allwood et al (1982) indicate the efficacy of using summaries along with the text material for recalling information. Summaries that abstract the main ideas could be supplemented with summaries that present explicitly labeled topics, a thesis statement, topic sentences, purpose statements, significance statements, and the author's writing plan for the chapter in regard to partitioning, sequencing, and text mode used as writing strategies. This way a reader could see the author's plan for content as well as for transcribing and composing; then the process of composing becomes transparent. Concluding summaries of content and composing would help readers confirm their hypotheses about what the author was saying and doing in the chapter.

Elaboration. The amount and type of elaboration needed for retention is a controversial topic (Reder & Anderson, 1980; 1982), but there is support for the notion that this text characteristic does help comprehension and retention of subject matter as reported by Wason (1962). In addition, Pepper (1981) reports that college students preferred a verbose, example-filled, poorly written computer programming textbook over a concise and well written one. Students felt the examples helped them learn. When texts were well-written and filled with examples, his study showed, comprehension improved.

There are many unelaborated generalizations in chapter six that no doubt would be problematic for sixth graders' comprehension and retention. One such generalization is that new ideas were coming to Europe. Students

are not told what the new ideas were, or why the new ideas were significant. No examples or reasons are given as elaborations, yet the whole section has the title New ideas come to Europe. The same situation exists for generalizations about change. Students are told that the early Middle Ages was changing, but no explicit examples are given of changes. Change is referred to in the singular except for the title Building Changes. The changes in diet, dress, class status, self-government, freedom, etc., are all implicit. There is no use made of specific illustrations and examples, no reasons given for why the changes were significant for the Middle Ages or for students today. In the section on the history of trade, explanations are lacking for why Genoa and Venice had to fight the Arabs. The chapter just asserts: Then they had to fight Arab ships to get safe use of the Mediterranean. The chapter seems to focus on events and concepts without giving students the necessary background information to understand why events happened or why generalizations are so. Students would probably want to know more about the conflict since conflicts are interesting aspects of human behavior as are the plans, goals and obstacles people have to content with. Armbruster and Anderson (1982) discuss the importance of explanations and goal directed behavior for understanding history. Therefore, just mentioning events and generalizations isn't enough for students to grasp and remember what they should learn about the Middle Ages nor to judge whether they should believe the text.

Style. Style cannot be slighted as a text characteristic that influences learning outcomes. What readers learn from text is heavily influenced by tone and style, both in terms of entry into the text (am I interested, put off, by the text) and in terms of evaluation of the content presented (what does it mean?), and in terms of intention to

remember (do I want to remember what this text/author says?). Authors concerned about author/reader relations are careful about the tone and style of the text--the distance between author and reader, the voice that comes across such as authoritarian, friendly, certain, uncertain, etc. The impression that the text makes on readers is an important determinant of acceptance of author and content and learning the information (Dillon, 1981, 1982; Gibson, 1969).

An objective, authoritarian, truth-giver style is the style used for chapter six, although there are a few shifts to an interpersonal style. The author(s) of chapter six do not take a stance on anything presented. There is no author perspective and very little author personality. Olson (1979) discusses the implication for textbooks when authors are divorced from their utterance. The result is an authoritarian textbook that readers and teachers do not dare to question. When readers read critically, prompted by a text with author perspective and overt presentation of self, there is a different kind of processing done at the time of encoding--a deeper kind of processing, no doubt, that might lead to better learning of the content or even rejection of the content, but with good retention.

The chapter's attempts at solidarity between author and readers are ineffective at best and possibly counterproductive. The sentence on page 125: <u>You have learned how Teutonic peoples conquered the Roman Empire</u> could come across to students as intimidating. The authoritarian instructor-author speaks to the no-status student. This is an example of a shift in what Goffman calls footing (cited in Dillon, 1982). The preceding sentences on the previous page were all objectively presented in third person

while a first person plural topicalizer had been used on page 124 where us does not really have the force of we (author + readers) but you readers-second person plural. The authors do not really intend to read the sections to see why these things were important, despite their use of us in Let us see why these things were so important, referring to the three events that spelled the end of the Middle Ages (nor does the chapter really explain why they were important--the intention is never achieved in the text!). Besides not handling the interpersonal aspect well, the text presents no hedges indicating that any facts could be uncertain except one on page 116: Sometimes at such a crossroads town a fair was held, which might last for days. A style that presents an authentic, reflective author might do much to enhance learning.

The chapter could also be improved by using a dramatic tone to communicate the wonder that Marco Polo and his father and uncle felt as they traveled through the Asian lands rather than the prosaic, neutral tone it does use. It could be improved by adding some real personal pronouns, non-intimating uses of you for solidarity, and drama where appropriate. In addition, the author could give his perspective on ideas--giving opinions and evaluating truth conditions as well as commenting on the content presented.

Content Density. As Amiran and Jones (1982) point out, even when texts are clearly organized, use explicit structural markers, and demand only normal inferring, they can still be problematic for readers' learning outcomes. If texts require readers to remember a great deal of earlier presented information in order to comprehend the text at any later point (a concept Amiran and Jones call content density) learning problems result. They define content density thus: a prose passage is dense in proportion to the number of its self-contained or unelaborated propositions which,

nevertheless, must be related by the reader. They give as an example, a chemistry equation with statements that X reaction is just like m with molecule a substituted for molecule b. Memory overload becomes a problem then for readers trying to remember the x, m, a, and b information. Content density is bound up with world knowledge, so content that is familiar to one reader will seem less dense than same content read by another who is unfamiliar with it.

The Middle Ages content is much less familiar to sixth graders than social studies content from modern times and from their own country. The content presented in chapter six seems very dense. A paragraph illustrating content density occurs on page 125 in a section on the development of languages and use of the vernacular for books. The students have had some exposure in an earlier chapter to the Roman Empire and a minimal amount of exposure to the Norse, Angles and Saxons, but this information was presented several chapters before chapter six.

> Language spoken beyond the boundaries of the old Roman Empire were not much changed by the Latin. These are called the Germanic languages. They are the languages spoken by the Norse and by the people who lived in the country now called Germany. The Angles and Saxons belonged to this group. They spoke a Germanic language when they migrated to Britain.
>
> The language that grew up in England was very much a mixture . . .

It seems clear that children would find not only this paragraph but surrounding paragraphs on the beginnings of Romance languages, the English language, and the transition from Latin to vernacular and from oral to written communication difficult to understand and remember. They would have little prior knowledge of language history or European history. The information needed to understand the terms in the paragraph would have

to be remembered from several months earlier. It is not clear that this section on language history is appropriate for sixth graders, but if it is included, the level of content density needs to be lowered in some way.

Further Suggestions for Improving Chapter Six

In order to achieve the goal of having an independent or partially independent reader who is textbook dependent and who has successful learning outcomes, chapter six would need to be completely rewritten. It would need a single author with a controlling idea and a stance who wrote with a sixth grade reader in mind. This author would keep in mind the tetrahedral model and the interaction of the four factors: learner characteristics and strategies, the criterion task, and text characteristics as the chapter was written. Each of the text characteristics discussed in this paper as well as others would be attended to. Then the completed chapter would be field-tested with sixth graders who would be interviewed and tested on the chapter.

Because of lack of time, no completely rewritten chapter is possible to show how it should be improved. What is offered instead is a patched up "pseudo text", a modified version of two sections of chapter six: New ideas come to Europe and Trade, towns and growing freedom. The modifications are concerned with only some of the text characteristics: those of explicit meaning cues (specifically, summaries), style, thematization, and elaboration.

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Chapter Six--Part One

The Later Middle Ages: Civilization Reborn

(Original Version)

Life in Europe was changing in the early 1100s. The early part of the Middle Ages was coming to an end. Travelers were bringing new ideas back to Europe.

During the early Middle Ages, most Europeans knew little about other parts of the world. Their lives were ruled by the promises that were part of the feudal system. People had to obey the lord who gave them their land. This meant that everyone was under the rule of someone else. The serfs were almost like slaves.

There were few schools, so most peasants had no education. They knew little of life outside their own village. A few nobles could read and write well. But there was little education even among the rich. Learning was found mostly in the monasteries and convents.

The early Middle Ages were years of many small wars, one after the other. People worried more about safety than about education and freedom. But slowly a change was taking place. This change was caused by many different things.

The Crusades had a big part in bringing about change. Poor people as well as rich had set out for Palestine. The crusaders had much to tell about Constantinople and the cities of Asia Minor. They had seen people who dressed differently from them and who lived in houses that were different. People began to see that the world was much larger than they had thought. They wanted to learn more about it.

The crusaders had seen the eastern markets with pepper and other spices that made food taste better. They brought back seeds of new fruits to plant, such as melons, peaches, apricots, and lemons. They brought fine cloth to make clothing. The silk and linen cloth that they brought was softer than the rough wool that they had been using. The crusaders also brought back new ideas about building castles and churches. This meant new ways of thinking and new things to think about.

Trade was another cause of change in Europe. Increasing trade helped bring freedom and learning back into Europe. As long as people have lived on the earth, there has been trade. The Greeks and Romans had used the Mediterranean Sea as a great highway. Goods from Asia came to the eastern Mediterranean ports by camel or mule train and by oxcart. The goods then went by ship to Italian and Spanish ports. There these goods were loaded into carts. These carts made their way along the Roman roads all over western Europe.

Even after the Roman Empire ended, a few ships still sailed the Mediterranean. When the Arabs took over northern Africa, Arab ships controlled that sea. Shipping from Europe almost stopped. But finally cities in northern Italy began to trade again with Asia. These cities grew because of their trade.

A map of trade routes would show one can find two of these cities, Genoa and Venice. Genoa is a harbor city on the west coast of Italy. Venice is built on islands on the west coast.

These two cities began to build trading fleets. Then they had to fight Arab ships to get safe use of the Mediterranean. Soon Genoa and Venice became rivals. Each city tried to get a better position at the ports of the eastern Mediterranean. They wanted to get richer cargoes to take home.

Trade between Europe and Asia began to increase. The Eastern Roman Empire was now very small. But Constantinople, the capital, was still a rich and strong city. To its harbor came goods from many parts of Asia. From Arabia, from Persia, from India and China, came perfumes, ivory, jewels, linen, and cotton cloth. Cotton cloth was new to Europeans. From India and the islands to the south came spices, such as cinnamon, pepper, and cloves. These spices were not grown in Europe.

A map of trade routes for this time period would show how goods were brought to Europe. Slow-sailing eastern ships brought goods from Asian ports to the northern end of the Persian Gulf. There the goods were loaded on camels. The goods were carried in long caravans across the deserts of Arabia and Syria. Ships also carried goods across the Red Sea to Egypt.

Farther north there were inland routes from India and China to ports on the Black Sea. Often these were merely rough trails. They led across wide deserts and through passes in the high mountains. Over these trails, traders led caravans of camels and mules. The animals carried packs of spices, fine silks, and jewels. The busy market places of Constantinople were full of these things. Here merchants of Venice and Genoa loaded their ships with eastern goods and sailed across the Mediterranean Sea.

When these ships docked in Italy, the precious goods were sold for high prices. The items were then placed in donkey carts or on the backs of mules. They were taken along forest trails and through mountain passes to different parts of Europe.

Rich people in the feudal lands of Europe were eager to get the trade goods. The Europeans had no refrigeration. Often their meat was strong-tasting or half spoiled. Spices made it taste better. Their clothing was of leather and rough woolen cloth. They were eager for clothes made of fine cotton and silk. After the Crusades began, Europeans learned more about the products of Asia. Trade between Europe and Asia grew rapidly.

Trade made new towns where one trade route crossed another. Sometimes at such a crossroads town a fair was held, which lasted many days. Merchants, both men and women, brought their goods to sell. People came to buy them. This made the town grow. Often a village on an estate became a trading place.

Merchants settled in these towns to carry on their trade. Men and women who could work in wood, metal, leather, or fabrics came to live there. Such skilled workers are called artisans. There were goldsmiths, glassmakers, dyers, bakers, weavers, and many others. They were not serfs but free people. Some of the merchants and some of the artisans grew rich.

These growing towns brought freedom to many people. The nobles who owned the land were glad to have merchants in the town. Nobles needed the work of skilled artisans. They wanted them to stay in the town, too. Also the nobles needed money, and the merchants and artisans had money. Nobles could get money from them to pay the costs of battles with other nobles. Many towns were also set up on church lands.

Both the nobles and the church leaders wanted the towns under their control. The townspeople wanted freedom from feudal taxes and duties. Sometimes they fought for this freedom. Others paid for their freedom with money.

A free town usually received a town charter. This was a written agreement. It listed the things the citizens of the town could do without asking permission from the nobles. By methods like this the townspeople kept increasing their rights. Gradually they won their freedom from the nobles and bishops. The townspeople made their own government. They elected a mayor and chose a town council to make laws. Often they built a wall around the town to protect it from attack.

In some parts of Europe, the artisans who worked at each craft, or trade, formed a sort of club. They called it a guild. Men who were artisans could hope to join a guild. But women who were artisans could not join unless their fathers or husbands were members.

The guilds helped democracy to grow in Europe. In the guilds people learned to make fair rules about their work. And they learned to see that these rules were obeyed. The guilds taught people to cooperate in making and enforcing rules. The same guild members used this cooperation in governing their towns. They made the laws and chose their officials. Women were usually kept out of guilds. So they were left out of town government. Men were gaining rights but women were not. Keeping women out of guilds did not help the growth of democracy. Yet making fair rules would some day include women. People were learning to make laws for a democracy.

The Later Middle Ages: Civilization Reborn

(Improved Version)

Several years ago while preparing this textbook for you, I began studying the changes in later Middle Ages when people in Europe became interested in learning and freedom. I decided then that this is an exciting and important topic and time of history to study. I think this is so because much of modern civilization had its beginnings during this time.

The main idea in the following section according to my point of view is that travelers to Asia helped cause changes in the last part of the Middle Ages because they brought back new ideas and goods to Europe. This main idea is important for you, I believe, because changes are also happening today caused by travelers to Asia who bring back new ideas and goods to Europe and America.

My purpose in the section that follows is to explain to you (1) which travelers brought back the new ideas and goods; (2) what the new ideas and goods were; and (3) what changes they caused for people in the last half of the Middle Ages; (4) that these changes have been passed down to civilizations today.

In Part One I review for you the early Middle Ages. The way I do this is by describing what life was like during that time. The main idea I am trying to get across to you here is that the early Middle Ages was a time wihout learning and freedom for most people.

I think it unfortunate that during the early Middle Ages, most Europeans knew little about other parts of the world. I also find it unfortunate that their lives were ruled by the promises that were part of the feudal system. People had to obey the lord who gave them their land. What I mean to say to you is that everyone was under the rule of someone else. The serfs were almost like slaves.

There were few schools, so most peasants had no education. It is certain, I think, that they knew little of life outside their own village. A few nobles could read and write well. But I think it probable that there was little education even among the rich. Learning was found mostly in the monasteries and convents.

The early Middle Ages were years of many small wars, one after the other. What I meant to say to you here is that people worried more about safety than about education and freedom. But slowly a change was taking place. This change was caused by many different things.

In my review I described life in the early Middle Ages so you will see the changes in learning nad freedom in the later Middle Ages. My main point was that during the early Middle Ages most Europeans were not free to rule themselves and had not learned much about life in the rest of the world. The importance of my main point is that learning and freedom increased after Europeans began traveling to Asia as Crusaders and traders. In Part Two I will tell you about the changes in learning that were caused by the crusaders. My topic now is the changes in the Later Middle Ages. My main idea for you in this part is that the crusaders had a big part in bringing about changes in what Europeans knew about other parts of the world. What I mean by this is that crusaders helped bring about a learning change when they brought new ideas and products from Asia to Europe. I believe that this idea is important for you to understand why trade with Asia increased after the Crusades.

In this part I explain for you the new ideas and changes in clothing, food, and building that were caused by travelers on crusades. The explaining is done by describing what the crusaders saw and learned on their travels through Asia and what they brought back with them.

Poor people as well as rich had set out for Palestine. I feel sure that the crusaders had much to tell about Constantinople and the cities of Asia Minor. They had seen people who dressed differently from them and who lived in houses that were different. People began to see that the world was much larger than they had thought. I do not doubt they wanted to learn more about it. What I have said means that people would now change the way they dressed, built houses and thought about geography because of the crusaders' travels.

The crusaders had seen the eastern markets with pepper and other spices that made food taste better. They brought back seeds of new fruits to plant, such as melons, peaches, apricots, and lemons. They brought fine cloth to make clothing. The silk and linen cloth that they brought was softer than the rough wool that they had been using. The crusaders also brought back new ideas about building castles and churches. This meant, I am certain, new ways of thinking and new things to think about. This meant, too, I believe, changes in what people ate and wore and their ways of building because they learned from the crusaders.

In this part I have explained how the travelers on crusades helped create an interest in learning and changes after 1100 in Europe with their new ideas about the size of the world, clothing, food, and buildings and new products from Asian markets.

My topic in this part is the changes caused by other travelers to Asia. Here my main idea I want you to understand is that some other travelers, the traders, also brought new ideas and trade goods from Asia to Europe and helped cause the Middle Ages to change. These new ideas and trade goods caused changes in the way people lived and thought about learning and freedom.

In order to explain to you what these changes were and how they happened, I will trace the history of European trade with Asia in this part. I begin with the Greek and Roman times, continue with the early Middle Ages, and end with the later Middle Ages when trade grew rapidly. I will also trace the way trade goods reached Europe from Asia on both land and sea routes throughout this time period.

I have no doubt that as people have lived on the earth, there has been trade. It is interesting to me that the Greeks and Romans had used the Mediterranean Sea as a great highway. Goods from Asia came to the eastern Mediterranean ports by camel or mule train and by oxcart. The goods then went by ship to Italian and Spanish ports. There these goods were loaded into carts. I think it probable these carts made their way along the Roman roads all over western Europe.

Even after the Roman Empire ended, a few ships still sailed the Mediterranean. When the Arabs took over northern Africa, Arab ships controlled that sea. It is unfortunate, I feel, that shipping from Europe almost stopped. But finally cities in northern Italy began to trade again with Asia. These cities grew because of their trade.

A map of trade routes would show two of these cities, Genoa and Venice. Genoia is a habor city on the west coast of Italy. Venice is built on islands on the east coast.

These two cities began to build trading fleets. Then they had to fight Arab ships to get safe use of the Mediterranean. Soon Genoa and Venice became rivals. Each city tried to get a better position at the ports of the eastern Mediterranean. They wanted to get richer cargoes to take home.

Trade between Europe and Asia began to increase. The Eastern Roman Empire was now very small. But I find it curious that Constantinople, the capital, was still a rich and strong city. To its harbor came goods from many parts of Asia. From Arabia, from Persia, from India and China, came perfumes, ivory, jewels, linen, and cotton cloth. Cotton cloth was new to Europeans. From India and the islands to the south came spices, such as cinnamon, pepper, and cloves. These spices were not grown in Europe.

A map of trade routes for this time period would show how goods were brought to Europe. Slow-sailing eastern ships brought goods from Asian ports to the northern end of the Persian Gulf. There the goods were loaded on camels. The goods were carried in long caravans across the deserts of Arabia and Syria. Ships also carried goods across the Red Sea to Egypt.

Farther north there were inland routes from India and China to ports on the Black Sea. Often these were merely rough trails. They led across wide deserts and through passes in the high mountains. It seems amazing to me that over these trails, traders led caravans of camels and mules. The animals carried packs of spices, fine silks, and jewels. The busy market places of Constantinople were full of these things. [illegible] merchants

of Venice and Genoa loaded their ships with eastern goods and sailed across the Mediterranean Sea.

When these ships docked in Italy, the precious goods were sold for high prices. The items were then placed in donkey carts or on the backs of mules. They were taken along forest trails and through mountain passes to different parts of Europe.

I am not surprised that rich people in the feudal lands of Europe were eager to get the trade goods. The Europeans had no refrigeration. Often their meat was strong-tasting or half spoiled. Spices made it taste better. Their clothing was of leather and rough woolen cloth. They were eager for clothes made of fine cotton and silk. After the Crusades began, Europeans learned more about the products of Asia. It is no wonder to me then that trade between Europe and Asia grew rapidly.

In this part I traced the history of trade and told how Genoa and Venice became great cities in Europe because of their trade with Asia on the sea routes in the Mediterranean Sea. I also traced the way trade goods from Asia reached the harbor city, Constantinople, and went from there to Genoa and Venice on trading ships and then went over land to Europe. I explained that as people in Europe learned about the new spices and clothing, they wanted them. Then trade grew rapidly and this caused changes in the way people ate and dressed and how much they knew about the Asian part of the world.

My main idea was that traders who traveled to Asia were another cause of the changes in the later Middle Ages. The significance of this idea for you is that these changes then led to more merchants, skilled workers and towns being free and this increase led to people being free today.

Let me now turn to the topic of changes of growing towns and growing freedom. I will discuss these changes by first explaining how traveling trader-merchants bringing new ideas and goods and trade routes caused new towns to begin and grow. I will continue the discussion by describing free towns and explaining how they caused freedom to grow.

My main point in this part is that the free towns that came about because of trading helped people learn how to rule themselves and be free. This is an important point for you to understand because learning about freedom helped deomocracy to grow and become possible for modern nations.

I think it was important that trade made new towns where one trade route crossed another. Sometimes at such a crossroads town a fair was held, which possibly lasted many days. Merchants, both men and women, brought their goods to sell. People came to buy them. I feel certain that this made the town grow. Often a village on an estate became a trading place.

Merchants settled in these towns to carry on their trade. Men and women who could work in wood, metal, leather, or fabrics also came to live there. Such skilled workers are called artisans. I think it probable there were goldsmiths, glassmakers, dyers, bakers, weavers, and many others. They were not serfs but free people. Some of the merchants and some of the artisans grew rich.

These growing towns brought freedom to many people. It seems lucky to me that the nobles who owned the land were glad to have merchants in the town. Nobles needed the work of skilled artisans. They wanted them to stay in the town, too. Also the nobles needed money, and the merchants and artisans had money. Nobles could get money from them to pay the costs of battles with other nobles. Many towns were also set up on church lands.

I am certain that both the nobles and the church leaders wanted the towns under their control. The townspeople wanted freedom from feudal taxes and duties. Sometimes they fought for this freedom. Others paid for their freedom with money.

A free town usually received a town charter. This was a written agreement. It listed the things the citizens of the town could do without asking permission from the nobles. By methods like this the townspeople kept increasing their rights. Gradually they won their freedom from the nobles and bishops. The townspeople made their own government. They elected a mayor and chose a town council to make laws. What I have been pointing out here is that free towns and town charters gave people a chance to learn about freedom. Often they built a wall around the town to protect it from attack.

In this part I explained how trade routes, new goods, merchants, and artisans helped towns grow. I discussed the townspeople's desire to live in a free town rather than under the control of the nobles and church. I then described the free town, and the town charter that increased the people's rights, and pointed out that the townspeople were learning about ruling themselves and being free. My main point was that trading caused free towns to develop and that the free towns gave people more chances to learn about freedom.

In order to fully explain how the growing towns helped learning and freedom to grow, I must describe in this part the guilds that were started by the artisans who lived in the towns. Then I must explain how the guilds like the free towns helped people learn how to make laws to govern themselves and be free.

As far as guilds are concerned, my main idea is that guilds helped learning, freedom, and democracy to grow in Europe. The reason for you to learn this idea, in my opinion, is that these changes in learning, freedom, and democracy spread from Europe to other places and were handed down to today's world.

In some parts of Europe, the artisans who worked at each craft, or trade, formed a sort of club. They called it a guild. It is not surprising to me that men who were artisans could hope to join a guild. But I feel it was unfortunate that women who were artisans could not join unless their fathers or husbands were members.

In the guilds people learned to make fair rules about their work. And they learned to see that these rules were obeyed. I am certain the guilds taught people to cooperate in making and enforcing rules. The same guild members used this cooperation in governing their towns. They made the laws and chose their officials. Women were usually kept out of guilds. So they were left out of town government. Men were gaining rights but women were not. Keeping women out of guilds did not help the growth of democracy. Yet making fair rules would some day include women. I think it was important that people were learning to make laws for a democracy.

The main point for this section in my opinion was that the new ideas and goods brought back to Europe by the crusaders and trader-merchants traveling in Asia caused the last half of the Middle Ages to be changed from the first half.

My purpose in this section was to make clear that (1) travelers to Asia (the Crusaders and traders) brought back new ideas and goods; (2) they brought back new ideas about the size of the world being very large, new ideas about styles of buildings and ways to hire and also

spices, melons, peaches, apricots, lemons, silks and linens; (3) people then changed the way they dressed, ate, and built homes, churches and castles; many changed from being serfs to free people and from living on a lord's manor to a free town. They began wanting to learn more and more, especially about freedom; (4) people today use some of the same kinds of food, ways of building, cloth, and ideas about being free.

According to my point of view, this means that it is important when people come in contact with other parts of the world because it changes in living and thinking.

In order to get the main point across and achieve the purpose I used a writing plan. First, I reviewed what the early Middle Ages was like. Then I described what crusaders saw on their travels and brought back with them and the changes that resulted. Next, I gave the history of trade and described how new ideas and goods got from Asia to Europe over trade routes. Finally, I explained the changes of new free towns, guilds, and freedom that came about from increased trade and traveling merchants.